Education Assessment Key Findings

MOLDOVA | August 2023

@REACH, Chisinau, 2023

REACH Informing more effective humanitarian action

UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency

unicef

Regional Refugee Response for the Ukraine Situation

Contents

01 Main Objectives

02 Methodology

03 Limitations

04 Key Findings

01
Main Objectives

Main Objectives

1. To understand the **access to** and the **conditions of Ukrainian online education** for school-aged refugee children in Moldova, incentives of online education, and the impact of remote learning on children's **social-emotional well-being**.

2. To explore the **experiences and conditions** of Ukrainian refugee children enrolled in Moldovan schools, and of their caregivers, regarding the **enrolment procedure, continuous learning and in-school social cohesion, and social-emotional well-being**.

Research Questions

1. To understand the **factors influencing the choice of education modality** by caregivers (Ukrainian online schooling or in -person schooling in Moldova)
2. To explore the **perception of barriers and facilitators to enrolment for in-person schooling in Moldova** for Ukrainian refugee children aged 6-17 years
3. To understand **how children perceive their education** since their displacement
4. To understand the **learning conditions and challenges of following Ukrainian online learning** from teacher and student's perspectives
5. To understand the **perceived quality of Ukrainian online learning and in-person schooling** in Moldova among the refugee children and their caregivers
6. To obtain a general sense of the **social and emotional well-being of refugee children** following Ukrainian online learning as well as those attending in-person schooling in Moldova
7. To understand the **needs of Moldovan teachers** to cope with the influx of refugee students
8. To assess the **level of social cohesion between refugee and Moldovan children** following both learning modalities (online and in-person)
9. To provide perspectives on what **future education policies**, opportunities, pre-requisite/ conditions etc. could assist refugees in accessing Moldovan in-person schooling

02

Methodology

Methodology

16

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

FGDs with Ukrainian refugee children ages 6-17 years:

- 12 FGDs with refugee children conducting online Ukrainian schooling and 4 FGDs with children conducting in person Moldovan schooling in Chisinau.

Discussions were conducted in small groups in child-friendly spaces.

25

Informant Interviews (IIs)

- IIs with 13 Caregivers with children ages 6-17 conducting online Ukrainian schooling, and 12 Parents/Caregivers with children conducting in person schooling in Chisinau.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted face to face.

18

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

- KIIs with 6 Moldovan primary school teachers, with 5 Moldovan secondary school teachers, and with 4 Ukrainian online schoolteachers.
- 1 education authorities from the Chisinau Municipality, 2 education authorities from the Ministry of Education and Research.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted face to face, interviews with Ukrainian teachers were conducted online.

Data was collected from June 19th to July 14th, 2023 in Chisinau

Sampling

FGDs children in person

Primary school
Total FGDs: 2
Ages: 8-11 years
N=6 children (3 male, 3 female)

Secondary school
Total FGDs: 2
Ages: 11-15 years
N=7 children (3 male, 4 female)

FGDs children online learning

Primary school
Total FGDs: 6
Ages: 8-11 years
N= 22 children (12 male, 10 female)

Secondary school
Total FGDs: 6
Ages: 11-17 years
N=24 children (12 male, 12 female)

	Ukrainian Online education				In-person Moldovan education				
	Primary school		Secondary school		Primary school		Secondary school		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Total
FGDs with children	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	16 FGDs
IIs with caregivers	6		7		5		7		25 IIs
KIIs with Moldovan school teachers					6		5		11 KIIs
KIIs with local authorities					1				1 KII
KIIs with Ukrainian online schoolteachers	4								4 KIIs
KIs with national authorities					2				2 KIIs

- FGDs with children were separated by gender and age to assess possible differences in experiences.
- IIs with Caregivers and KIIs with Moldovan schoolteachers were separated by child's grade level.

03

Limitations

Limitations

Limitations:

- The sampling frame was non-randomized, non-random sampling may introduce selection bias into the data.
- Certain indicators may be under-reported or over-reported due to a respondent bias (subjectivity and perceptions of respondents).
- Purposive sampling strategy reduces the generalisability of data, so any information captured is only indicative of those sampled.
- Nonresponse to questions asked to children or adults can introduce bias in results.

Timing of assessment:

When interpreting findings, users should keep in mind that data collection was conducted from June 19th, 2023, to July 14th, 2023. Due to the volatility of the situation and high level of movement, findings should be interpreted as a snapshot of the situation of refugees at this time.

04

Key Findings

Perspectives on Learning Modalities

Learning Perspectives

- Most **children taking online classes dislike or are unsure** if they like online schooling while **no child taking in-person classes reported disliking attending school in Moldova**. The reasons children reported disliking online classes include lessons not being clear, poor internet, poor learning quality, desire to socialise, **alarms and other disruptions to class**.
- **Children reported enjoying taking classes online due to their familiarity with their Ukrainian teachers** and being able to stay at home. The majority reported **not wanting to go to school in Moldova**, preferring instead to continue online classes. However, secondary school children were mixed in their opinions with many wanting to attend school to socialise.
- **Children attending school in person enjoy their classmates and the teacher's explanation of lessons**. The children **dislike** getting up in the morning and certain **lessons such as Romanian language with which they have trouble**, as well as political talk among children. Some secondary school children reported feeling discrimination by a teacher for being Ukrainian.

"We don't get the knowledge we need, and the lessons only last 25 minutes."
(secondary school child's perspective on online learning)

Enrolment Decision-Making

Enrolment Barriers

- Most **online caregivers** did not attempt to enrol their child in school in Moldova but prefer instead to continue online learning due to reasons such as their **familiarity with the language and curriculum of instruction** even if the majority are not satisfied with the quality of learning.
- Those caregivers that attempted to enrol mostly faced barriers. These include **difficulties with registering the child in school due to paperwork needed from Ukraine, not having yet received or applied for Temporary Protection Status, distance from residence**, registration difficulties with the Moldovan school.
- **In-person caregivers** mostly reported that the **process of enrolment was easy**, those few that reported it being hard had similar difficulties to those mentioned by online caregivers. Additionally, most in person caregivers did not face barriers to enrolment related to school fees, cost of school supplies, or transport.
- **Education authorities** reported being aware of similar barriers to enrolment as reported by caregivers (curriculum, language), but did not mention the process of enrolment or Temporary Protection (as caregivers reported) as a barrier to enrolment.

''No, because of the language barrier and we didn't want to lose the school place in Ukraine, and we didn't want to replace the teachers.'' (caregiver explaining why she did not attempt to enrol her child in school in Moldova)

Enrolment Facilitators

Online Caregivers:

- To facilitate enrolment, the main considerations of caregivers include the desire for the child to gain course credit in Ukraine for the lessons they complete either by completing courses in the Moldovan curriculum or by adding courses based on the Ukrainian curriculum to Moldovan schools. The length of the war or its outcome is also a consideration, with some parents reportedly thinking more seriously about enrolment as the war continues.

In-person Caregivers

- To ensure enrolment caregivers reported the addition of Ukrainian language to the curriculum in Moldova, helping children to receive grades instead of being listeners, and simplifying the enrolment and temporary protection process.

Caregiver recommendations for Moldovan Education Authorities

- Education authorities can facilitate enrolment by adding courses taught in Ukrainian to Moldovan schools. Also, increasing the information about schooling options for refugee children. Some also don't know what to recommend because they have not yet attempted to enrol.

Caregiver recommendations for Ukrainian Education Authorities

- First, allowing children taking classes in Moldova to obtain a valid certificate in Ukraine. Also, to have courses teaching the Ukrainian language. Some caregivers reported wanting better communication from the Ministry about options for education for their child.

Learning Challenges

Learning Challenges

"For the first six months of the war there were full-time and online classes, and after six months there was a striking difference. That is, the online classes lagged far behind the offline classes. Those who studied offline were significantly better at learning the material."

(Ukrainian teacher speaking about the impact of online learning on students)

- Online children reported that when they face difficulties in learning, there are no coping mechanisms to respond to these challenges. Classes are either shortened or cancelled due to the disruptions mentioned. Caregivers report that children often get distracted and must conduct self-learning for subjects which cannot be taught online. Most report coping strategies such as using recordings of lessons to review material, or being more involved in the child's learning, but some also agree that there is no preferred strategy.
- Some online children have trouble accessing education in Moldova due to poor or no internet connection, no equipment to study online, technical issues with their devices, though the majority report no difficulties. Some students reported using a combination of devices such as cell phone, computers, or tablets, but the majority use a cell phone to access classes, although this is not preferred.
- Online schoolteachers report that the learning ability of children has been impacted negatively due to online education, they are less active during lessons, few attend class, and they have difficulty communicating. The caregiver's support is needed more in learning, grades are not reflective of the learning of the child, and children have difficulty combining online and in-person education.
- The in-person caregivers reported that the difficulties the children face in learning related to differences in curriculum, political talk by children, and language difficulties. One caregiver reported that the child's grades have dropped due to combining in-person and online learning.

Social Emotional Well-Being

Social-Emotional Well-Being

Online children

Online children reported mostly having worries and especially primary school children, since displacement. The children mostly worry about family and friends back home in Ukraine, they miss the life they had, some worry about bad events reported on the news. One child mentioned the number of Russians in Moldova as a worry. Some children also expressed positive feelings about their situation in Moldova. They like it here, have adapted to life, and feel safe. Overall, females reported having more worries than males.

Online teachers also reported some negative changes in the student's behavior and well-being. Changes mentioned include, sadness, being afraid of sirens, increased levels of aggression, sensitivity to lessons where war is discussed. Teachers reported a negative impact on socialization, their relationships with other students has been impacted negatively.

In-person children

In-person school children have mixed feelings since coming to Moldova. As the online children, they also worry about their relatives or friends back home, but also share equally good feelings about their situation in Moldova.

In contrast to online teachers, Moldovan teachers mostly reported noticing no difficulties related to social emotional well-being of children. Of the small number of reported challenges, sensitivity to noises, reserved behavior, being frightened, stressed were reported. The teachers reported the children were able to become more comfortable over time so that their well-being has improved.

Online Caregivers Social emotional impact and learning

Most online caregivers reported seeing negative changes in the well-being of their children since displacement such as losing interest in school, no ability to socialise or missing family from Ukraine.

Most online primary school caregivers believe that these changes in well-being have no impact on their child's ability to learn, while secondary school caregivers were mixed, reporting difficulty in concentration or distress caused by memories from home in Ukraine.

In-Person Caregivers- Social emotional impact on learning

Caregivers of in-person children mostly have observed negative changes in well-being, however these changes reported were mostly from the time of arrival; in fact, many changes to a state of positive well-being since then were mentioned. The negative impacts reported were difficulty in concentration on schoolwork. Positive impacts include improved learning and less war related distraction.

Most primary school caregivers believe that these changes in well-being have impacted their child's ability to learn in a positive way, while secondary school caregivers are mixed.

Socialisation/Integration

Socialisation and Integration

Online children

- Online children mostly reported have a good relationship with their online peers but also mostly do not communicate with their online classmates outside of class, this is made more difficult as the majority of their classmates do not live in Moldova.
- Only about half of online children report socialising with friends in Moldova, children play games and go for walks, play sports, go to camps, or events in the city. Many have a mixture of Ukrainian and Moldovan friends.
- Online caregivers mostly reported that their children had not faced difficulties interacting with their Moldovan peers. Some reported challenges include war-related insults and the language barrier. Children reported the same difficulties. In the future, caregivers mostly see challenges for their child to integrate into life in Moldova if they continue online education. These mostly relate to language difficulties and the inability to socialise.

In-person children

- Almost all in-person children reported a good relationship with their peers at school and socialise outside of class with friends in their free time, with only a few reporting difficulties in relationships. Caregivers reported some political talk causes arguments and the language barrier.

Moldovan teachers

- Moldovan teachers mentioned the main integration challenge for refugee students is the difference is curriculum between Ukrainian and Moldovan schools, and language difficulties. Many also reported no difficulties.
- Perspectives surrounding issues with cohesion were reported by some teachers. One teacher mentioned political discussions between children can sometimes reach the point of a fight. The language differences were also a source of misunderstandings between children.
- Differences in treatment between refugee and Moldovan children related to the attention given to refugee children have resulted in some negative feelings.

"... personally we have not encountered, but I know that there are precedents, let's say you are refugees from Ukraine. Many families hold the opinion that Russia is right and children, you know, they do not think, they just express the opinion of their parents, and it all affects their peers and in particular children from Ukraine, so there are such conflicts, especially in those families that support Russia's policies. Adults also often have conflicts, and children also have conflicts because of that, they can also tease, I know that for sure." (Online caregiver perspective on cohesion)

Socialisation and Integration Measures

Caregivers

- To better integrate Ukrainian refugee children to life in Moldova, online caregivers recommend increasing opportunities to communicate with Moldovans, participation in sports clubs, summer camps, and language courses (Romanian, Russian).
- Primary school caregivers recommend one Ukrainian class in every Moldovan school, social adaptation programs to unite adults of refugee children with others. One caregiver reported that children should not discuss political topics.
- In-person caregivers recommend having more joint activities with Moldovan children such as extracurricular activities, excursions, and finding a common language to communicate.

"Mostly I go to the Millennium (activity centre), we go to events and tournaments, basically we just do sports, boxing, football, basketball, volleyball." (secondary school child's social activities)

Support Needs

Support Needs

Children

- Online children reported needing assistance to access online classes through **internet, technology** (computers, tablet), and books for school.
- In-person children reported **Romanian language courses**, new books, and internet.

Caregivers

- Caregivers reported **internet access, technology for their child to study online**, and space for studying as needs.
- More **Romanian language course and to publicise them, adding courses in Ukrainian language to schools**, allowing children to **receive credit for schooling towards their Ukrainian school certificate**.

Ukrainian online teachers

- Ukrainian online schoolteacher requested **psychological help for teachers and a break from the teaching workload**. One teacher also requested increased communication for teachers with the Ministry of Education of Ukraine.
- Designating a single school for those who study online abroad so that all children can be assessed equally in the same conditions. Clarity on how students should be evaluated by teachers, and caregiver's options for their child's education.

Moldovan teachers

- Moldovan teachers mainly reported the need for **school psychologists for children, but most teachers do not need any extra resources**. Teachers also did not request any specific help from authorities.

Moldovan education authorities

- To ensure the quality of education for students, **continued teacher training on refugee interaction as well as monetary benefits for teachers working extra hours was reported**.

Next Steps

August

Key Findings

Analysis output

- Data saturation grid

September

Reporting

- Final report (end September)
- Key findings presentations

Acknowledgements

This assessment was made possible through funding from UNHCR.

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

And with the support from our partners at UNICEF and the Education Working Group

unicef

Thank you for your attention

joanna.filopoulos@impact-initiatives.org

REACH Informing more effective humanitarian action

Adolescent Mental Health and Well-being Assessment

Overview of the Assessment

Research Objective

- Gain a comprehensive understanding of **the psychosocial well-being conditions and needs of refugee adolescents (14-18 years old)** in Moldova, including their **access to formal and informal support**, in order to inform humanitarian and development programmes implemented by actors active in the refugee response in Moldova, especially those supporting refugee adolescents.

Specific Objectives

- Explore the predominant **cultural views and perceptions** of the Ukrainian community regarding psychosocial well-being
- Identify the key **risk and protective factors** impacting the well-being of refugee adolescents in Moldova
- Investigate the **coping mechanisms** employed by refugee adolescents to deal with or overcome the risk factors affecting their well-being.
- Determine the **primary well-being needs** of adolescent refugees
- Assess the **availability, awareness, accessibility and appropriateness of formal and informal support services**, particularly MHPSS, for refugee adolescents in Moldova, including recommendations of improvement
- Understand the **main hopes and concerns for the future** of refugee adolescents

Data Collection Methods

- Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with: **medical practitioners, regional services providers (e.g. coordinators or other relevant expert), national services providers.**
- Consultations with **adolescents** (FGDs)
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with **caregivers**

Assessed Locations

- North region: **Balti, Edinet**
- Centre region: **Ungheni, Orhei**
- Chisinau region: **Municipality of Chisinau**
- South region: **Ceadir Lunga, Cahul**

Sampling Table Draft

Region	Centre		Chisinau		North		South		Total in all regions
Gender	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Adolescents Consultations	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	16
FGDs with caregivers	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	16
KIIs with MHPSS practitioners	3		3		3		3		12
KIIs with regional experts and MHPSS service coordinators	3		3		3		3		12
KIIs with national coordinators of MHPSS services	3								3

For the effective and timely completion of Data Collection, we would be grateful for your support with

| Support with identifying and facilitating access to respondents

- Adolescents
- Caregivers of adolescents
- Medical practitioners
- Regional services providers (e.g. coordinators or other relevant expert) – NGOs/CSOs/UN Agencies
- National services providers - NGOs/CSOs/UN Agencies

| Support with spaces to conduct data collection in the assessed locations

- Particularly for Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), it is crucial to provide a suitable environment (safe and comfortable space) for participants

Timeline

25/10

Finalisation of Research Design and Questionnaires

26-27/10

Training of Enumerators

26-27/10

Start of Data Collection